

Randolph, Mass
Oct 13th 1890.

My dear Mrs. Smith

I wish

I could write an autograph
letter worth of being read before
your friends, and I hesitate
to comply with your request only
because of the conviction that
I never wrote a fair good letter
in my life, and that it is an
absurdity for me to offer one
to an audience of five hundred.

However, you are so kind
to ask me, and I feel that

you do me such an honor
in introducing me to your
club that I cannot refuse.

The reason that you know
nothing about me personally is
probably because the personals
have mostly appeared lately in the
Boston papers. If you wish I
will give you a short one of
myself. I was born here in
this little village of Randolph.
~~then~~ went to live in Brattleboro
Vermont when twelve years old
and returned here in 1884 after
the deaths of my parents, and
sister. I have now no near
relations, and live with the family
of a school friend, a very dear
friend like a sister, whom I

have known ever since I was
a child. I have some rooms
of my own, two sitting rooms
on the first floor with a desk
in each, and I write at either
as the fancy takes me. Just
now I am writing in my back
parlor, when I have an open
fire place, an old fashioned Erie
hearth. Sometimes on winter nights
in roast potatoes in the ashes.

This is the old homestead of
my friend's family, and I suppose
they ^{had} had many a similar evening
party ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{last} generations back; —

This summer I spent a
few weeks in Old Deerfield,
when the whole atmosphere seems
mystic with the past, and one
has a ^{half} fear, on going to bed, that

one may be awakened by an
Indian war whoop before morning.
Just opposite my boarding place was
the old tavern where Benedict Arnold
stayed over night, and in one of
the front rooms is the corner cup-
board before which he stood, and
drank a glass of rum. One of the
Lafayette citizens has the glass, but
I did not see it.

It first occurs to me that I
am rather diverging from my own
history, but Benedict Arnold's glass
may be the most graceful way of
bringing it to a close.

I am very glad indeed to han-
dler this letter for you, if you
can make the slightest use of
it in your club meeting. I am
much pleased that you like my
stories, and please greet very kindly
for me, your five hundred friends.

I am very truly yours,
Mary E. Wilkins